

Orlando: You are not alone. Your Nation is here with you, and we won't back down in the face of terrorism.

REMEMBERING GEORGE VOINOVICH

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, on one final matter, I wish to say a few words about a colleague we lost this past weekend.

George Voinovich was the oldest of six children and, until his late teens, an aspiring doctor. Then he realized he didn't get along with the scientists, so he joined the Boy Scouts. He got involved in student government, and he told his friends that one day he would become mayor and Governor.

He was right. This is the guy voters chose to turn around Cleveland after a wrenching fiscal crisis. Mayor Voinovich came to office with a simple motto: "Together We Can Do It." And together they did. Debts were paid down, jobs were added, and slowly the buckle of the Rust Belt became comeback city.

His success propelled him to the Governor's mansion, where he served two terms, and then to the U.S. Senate, where he served another two terms. Here in the Senate, he was at the forefront of a number of important policy debates. He was an advocate for more efficient and effective government. He was an advocate for an "all of the above" energy approach. And this son of Eastern European immigrants cited his work to help spearhead two rounds of NATO expansion as one of his proudest achievements. "[When NATO's Secretary General] officially announced the decision to invite Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia," he recalled, "this was truly one of the most thrilling days of my tenure as a Senator." Senator Voinovich had a storied political career that took him from Cleveland, to Columbus, to Washington, and around the world. All along, he kept himself guided by his Catholic faith and anchored by his family.

He ultimately retired to spend more time with the people who really mattered. At the top of that list was the woman who made him whole. If you don't think storybook romances can start at a Cleveland Young Republicans Club, then you didn't know George and Janet Voinovich. George and Janet were best friends, they were political confidantes, and they were deeply in love. Here in Washington, you could find them strolling to the Capitol for work or to St. Joe's for mass. When Janet came to visit the office, George would greet her with a kiss and a hug. When the Voinoviches flew back to Cleveland, which was most weekends, they would hold hands and say a prayer across the aisle to prepare for takeoff. And when it was wheels down, Janet would put Ohio's senior Senator to work on their modest home in Cleveland. They purchased that house in the 1970s in the same working-class neigh-

borhood where George was raised. They spent the rest of their lives together in the same house, but they never got around to installing an air-conditioner. "Too expensive," George said.

George Voinovich was known for many things in his decades of public service. He was honest, he was plainspoken, he was loyal to those who worked for him, and, yes, he was frugal. Janet may not have appreciated it when the heat waves hit, but these are qualities that served him well in office.

When asked about his legacy, Senator Voinovich said he just wanted to know he had touched people's lives and made things better. The mark of his impact across his city and across his State is clear enough to see. There is the Voinovich School of Leadership and Public Affairs at Ohio University, the Voinovich Trade Center in Columbus, the Voinovich atrium at Cleveland's Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, and the George V. Voinovich Bridge. The bridge named for a man known for building bridges of his own went dark in his honor last night.

The city of Cleveland, the State of Ohio, and the citizens of our country have lost an outstanding public servant. Many of us have lost a good friend. The Senate marks his passing with sorrow. We will keep Janet and the rest of the Voinovich family in our thoughts.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Democratic leader is recognized.

REMEMBERING GEORGE VOINOVICH

Mr. REID. Madam President, before I start my remarks on the subject of the day, I wish to speak about another subject of the day, as Senator MCCONNELL has indicated, George Voinovich. He was a fine man. He died yesterday morning. He was a colleague and a friend. He passed away at his home in Cleveland, which Senator MCCONNELL talked about. He was one of the most experienced public servants with whom I have served. His career in public service began 53 years ago as Ohio's assistant attorney general. From there, he served as a member of the Ohio House of Representatives, county auditor, county commissioner, Lieutenant Governor, mayor of Cleveland, Governor of Ohio, and then in 1999 he brought his wealth of experience to the U.S. Senate.

Senator Voinovich was well regarded for his preparation and hard work. He was courageous. George was one of the few Senate Republicans to speak out against the unpaid-for Bush tax cuts because he thought they were wrong. He questioned the strategy of the war in Iraq, which he also thought was wrong. George Voinovich was right on both of those issues, and the other Republicans were wrong.

Senator Voinovich voted to repeal don't ask, don't tell and bucked the rest of his party by voting for background checks on all firearm purchases at gun shows. Again, he was right, and his colleagues were wrong.

Today the Senate mourns the Voinovich family.

I send my personal condolences to George's wife of 54 years, Janet; their children, George, Betsy, and Peter; and their seven grandchildren. He was a great Senator. He will be missed by his loved ones, the people of Ohio, and the United States.

MASS SHOOTING IN ORLANDO

Mr. REID. Madam President, everyone is in a state of shock and sadness today, following the worst mass shooting in modern American history.

The facts continue to develop—I had a long conversation with the FBI this morning—but we do know this much. A shooter pledging allegiance to ISIS opened fire at an LGBT locality in Orlando, FL, killing 49 people and leaving dozens seriously injured. This was an act of terror in every sense of the word. This was an attack on the LGBT community and all of America.

My heart goes out to the victims, their families, especially those who were killed and wounded, and to the many first responders who were on the scene where one police officer was wounded.

I hope every Member of the House and Senate had time for quiet reflection yesterday to ask what we could have done to prevent this tragedy. I had time to think about it. I am heart-sick. I am basically sick by our inaction. It is shameful that the U.S. Senate has done nothing—nothing—to stop these mass shootings. Is this what we want for America? I don't think so.

Do we want to live in a country where someone who has sworn allegiance to ISIS can walk into a store, buy assault weapons and explosives, and murder dozens of Americans in a club or at a school? I don't think we do. Is that a country where we want to live? Because that is the country where we live now, thanks to the National Rifle Association and their cowardly supporters in Congress.

Last December, the senior Senator from California proposed legislation that would prevent FBI terror suspects from purchasing firearms and explosives. All but one Republican voted against the Feinstein amendment. That means that as of today, FBI terror suspects can walk into a gun store and legally purchase assault weapons and explosives. It is beyond me how these same Republicans go home knowing they voted to let FBI terror suspects continue to buy assault weapons.

Senate Republicans have voted against expanding background checks, limits on the size of ammunition clips, and the assault weapons ban. How can these same Republicans campaign for reelection in good conscience, knowing

they voted to block every sensible bill to address gun violence? Not some of them, all of them.

For example, how can the junior Senator from Florida—who all of a sudden has an interest in running for reelection—how can he speak of running for office again when he voted to let potential terrorists buy assault weapons and explosives? That is how he voted. The junior Senator has voted against every gun safety measure. He was quoted as saying: Well, with what happened yesterday, I might reconsider. He better reconsider his gun votes. He voted against background checks, assault weapons ban, and against legislation limiting the size of ammunition clips.

I ask again: Is this what we want for America? Mass shooting after mass shooting, and each new attack, it seems, is worse than the previous one.

We still have much to learn about the Orlando shooting, but we know one thing for sure. Congress is failing to do anything to prevent these mass killings—anything. Why? Because of Republican obstruction. Because of Republican obstruction, we are doing nothing. We are failing every one of the people killed on Sunday, their families, the whole State of Florida—the whole country. We are failing the families. We are failing everyone who has died in these mass shootings—and there are thousands of them—and those who have lost loved ones to mass shootings—thousands of them, I repeat; the injured, tens of thousands.

As President Obama said yesterday, “To actively do nothing is a decision as well.” And my Republican colleagues have made that decision: doing nothing.

It is time again to try to stop the plague of gun violence. We have a responsibility as lawmakers to do what we can to prevent these shootings, to enact commonsense reforms—nothing radical—that have proven to stop these attacks and save lives.

We should start by closing the loophole that allows terrorists to legally purchase weapons and explosives. Remember, everyone, we voted on this. Everyone in this Chamber should be able to agree that a suspected terrorist shouldn't have guns. Is it more than common sense? I don't think so.

We should do something to expand background checks, ensuring that terror suspects and criminals don't slip through the cracks, and we should do something to limit the size of weapon magazines and clips. There is no reason for gun stores to sell these clips that are that big, magazines or drums designed for the mass killing of human beings. That is what they are made for—no other purpose. People don't hunt with them.

Our Nation can no longer ignore the fact that every day Americans are being gunned down in cold blood. We can no longer ignore the will of the people. We shouldn't, at least. We can no longer ignore the will of the people.

The overwhelming majority of voters support these proposals. According to a

December poll by one of the foremost polling agencies in America, nearly 90 percent of Americans are in favor of expanded background checks. It doesn't matter what State you go to. This was a nationwide poll. In Nevada, Massachusetts, Iowa—it doesn't matter where you go. More than 80 percent of Americans want to close so-called terror loopholes, preventing people on terror watch lists from purchasing firearms. I see my friend from Florida behind me. Of course they care, as much as anyone, if not more, today.

Yet, in spite of the public's demand for action, Senate Republicans continue to cower—cower—before the NRA and the Gun Owners of America. The NRA is bad—really bad—but Gun Owners of America is even worse than bad. These two organizations are competing, seeing just how extreme they can be in pushing for more guns and fewer protections. And I know, after the statement I am making today, they will send out these fundraising calls: REID is trying to take away our guns. Send us some money.

These two organizations are competing to see how extreme they can be in pushing for more guns and fewer protections. Congressional Republicans are content just to go along. Republicans are so terrified of the extreme right that they refuse to pass legislation supported by the vast majority of their own constituents. The NRA and the Gun Owners of America mean more to them than the people they represent.

Do you know what terrifies the American people? It is not the NRA. It is not the Gun Owners of America. Mass shootings scare the American people. Innocent victims being gunned down at nightclubs and holiday parties and schools and movie theaters, that is what scares the American people.

Republicans need to find the backbone to stand up to groups like the NRA and Gun Owners of America. Senate Republicans are stalling important mental health legislation because they are afraid to talk about gun safety measures. Not only are they stalling, but Senate Republicans—led by the assistant Republican leader—are even threatening to include a provision that weakens the FBI's current background check system—which isn't much, to be honest with you—and to weaken it more would be speaking volumes.

We don't need to hear any more of the gun lobby's talking points about how more guns are the answer to what is going on in America or hiring security guards will solve our Nation's scourge of gun violence. The Pulse nightclub in Orlando had security, and there was reportedly an armed, off-duty police officer on the scene, but even that didn't prevent this tragedy.

Instead of pushing for more guns, maybe it is time to make it harder for terrorists and criminals to get guns. It is time for Congress to do something to stop the mass slaughter that is being carried out in our communities. How

else can we describe it? Are 50 dead people—49 plus the killer—49 dead people—is that enough to get our attention? The 50-odd who were injured, and somebody may be paralyzed, is that enough to get our attention?

It is time for Congress to do something—something—to stop this mass slaughter that is being carried out in our communities. Going forward, Democrats are going to continue to support and continue to push these solutions to our Nation's gun violence epidemic, and we are going to, as soon as we can, force a vote on this terror loophole. We are going to do this as soon as possible. There is no excuse for allowing suspected terrorists to buy guns.

There is much we can do but not if Republicans aren't serious about addressing these problems, and historically it has been proven they do not care.

I hope Republicans will find the courage, like George Voinovich, to help us pass meaningful legislation to protect the American people. By the way, George Voinovich was a good Republican.

Madam President, will the Chair announce the business for the rest of the day.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2017

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of S. 2943, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2943) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2017 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes.

Pending:

McCain amendment No. 4607, to amend the provision on share-in-savings contracts.

Reed (for Reid) amendment No. 4603 (to amendment No. 4607), to change the enactment date.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Florida.

MASS SHOOTING IN ORLANDO

Mr. NELSON. Madam President, I have just returned from the command center of the emergency operations center, a temporary one that has been set up in the middle of South Orange Avenue, very close to the Pulse nightclub, not far from the hospital where so many of the victims have been taken, where 9 of the victims died in the care of the doctors, and where there are up to 50 people, some of whom are still fighting for their lives.

Needless to say, Orlando is shocked. We didn't know a place that sometimes